



STILL HOPES

Episcopal Retirement Community

June 5, 2020.

Dear Still Hopes' Family,

Our challenging times have become even more challenging.

In recent months, Still Hopes has been very active in listening to the advice of many “expert” voices, and striving to live our mission in support of our residents, their family members, and our staff team during the COVID-19 pandemic. But recent events make it crystal clear that we are facing another, equally deadly, pandemic. As the American Psychological Association declared recently, “We are living in a racism pandemic.” This “racism pandemic” is as disconcerting as it is a challenge to each of us, individually and collectively. For only by confronting the systemic racism in our country can we ever achieve understanding and justice.

Last week's terrible events in Minneapolis—and so many other terrible events that have occurred around the country, even right here in Columbia—are more than heartbreaking. We are witnessing, in our country, lots of indifference to racism and, often times, its casual acceptance of violence directed at people of color. For a good number in our community, the killings are deeply personal, and painful beyond belief. Not all of us know what it feels like to be afraid, nearly every day. But we do know that one of us, one of our friends or a co-worker, could become a victim of violence. We can't walk in anyone else's shoes. We can try our best to understand what it feels like to be disenfranchised and/or marginalized. We must stand together as one family, one team, Team Still Hopes.

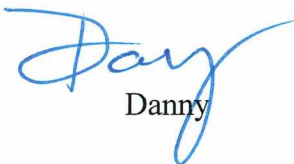
COVID-19, the coronavirus that we are all fighting, robs people of their health, instills fear, and in too many cases, ends lives. Racism, bigotry, and hatred do the same—robbing lives while instilling fear and anger. What is taking place across this country right now shines a spotlight on people who must live their lives being afraid, angry, and/or hurt. It shines that light on what many of you face all too regularly.

Still Hopes is OUR community. Our values—of acceptance of one another as **Family**, our **Attitude** that we can do anything TOGETHER, our use of **Integrity** in dealing with one another, our spirit of ONE **Team**, and our focus on holistic **Health**—must set us apart. We have worked hard to build a family community, one that

nurtures belonging and compassion for one another. So, in this time of social injustice, let's reach out as we always do, comfort each other, and respond as friends, and as family, who truly care about one another. Still Hopes is, and will continue to be, a place that continually strives to be inclusive and free from discrimination. A place that teaches and practices the value of respect and encourages each of us to accept and embrace all our family members. A place where we know that while we may differ, we are all bound to one another in our humanity. A place that values every person's voice, no matter how different the opinion. A place that strives for greater understanding overall.

Our hearts go out to all. We ask that our spirits come together, in our community, to do our best to defeat the hatred, racism, bigotry, and divisiveness we see around us, and as people of faith to raise awareness of the social injustices in our society when and where we can.

We want for us all to have supportive and uplifting dialogue and constructive conversations. We wish we could gather now in our Chapel of The Holy Spirit to talk together and to pray as a family. COVID-19 robs us of that possibility, and that leads to this letter. Given the circumstances of our current environment; please let us know what ideas, reflections, or observations you have about Still Hope's role in addressing these, or any, divisive issues. We value your input. Journey on with grace, gratitude and that real team spirit! Stay Still Hopes Strong!



Danny



Father Rich